

# Intensive U. S. Bombing Has Ruined Much of North, Yale Chaplain Says After Viet Tour

Chicago Sun-Times  
CHICAGO — The Rev. William Sloane Coffin Jr. walked through Nam Dinh, a town 50 miles south of Hanoi, during his recent trip to North Vietnam. He saw two houses left standing.

U. S. bombing has levelled the rest of the community of 50,000 he said. One of the two houses left was the local military headquarters.

This and other observations were reported here by the Yale University chaplain and peace activist to show that American bombs hit civilian targets and even sometimes miss military ones.

His commentary was in marked opposition to that reported in the Chicago Daily News by the Rev. John McLaughlin S. J., a White House speechwriter and aide.

Father McLaughlin, once unsuccessful Republican candidate for the U. S. Senate from Rhode Island, said U. S. bombers "assiduously avoid civilian targets."

Coffin, on the other hand, said he saw hospitals and churches destroyed in North Vietnam, which he visited in order to escort three American prisoners home.

"Only one city is left, Hanoi," Coffin said. "All else is in ruins. One raid alone on Haiphong caused 1,000 civilian deaths."

McLaughlin defended the bombing of the North as necessary to destroy supplies needed for the invasion of the South.

But this bombing made almost no difference, Coffin said, because North Vietnamese supplies were "strung out" in long supply routes, rather than concentrated in warehouses.

"There was nothing to bomb," Coffin said.

McLaughlin said the Hanoi regime runs "the worst police state in the world," but Coffin said he saw only "one guard"

standing before the Hanoi premiere's residence.

"How do you explain the morale of the North Vietnamese army (if the Hanoi government is so repressive?)" he asked, "or the CIA's failure to get intelligence from it or subvert the Hanoi regime?"

He admitted that there is no opposition press or political party in the north and he fore-

saw "problems in the future" when the present national unity "in the face of the invader (the U.S.)" is no longer present.

McLaughlin predicted that a "bloodbath" of between 500,000 and 1,000,000 deaths would follow a Communist takeover in the south.

Coffin also predicted a kind of bloodbath after the fall of the present Saigon regime.

Revenge against President Nguyen Van Thieu's own history of repression is inevitable, he said, "once Thieu is reunited with his bank account" and his "brittle basis of power" is destroyed.